

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 are pending. By this Amendment, Claims 1-4 are amended. Applicants respectfully submit no new material is presented herein.

Claims 1-4 Recite Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 5,271,490 to Sticht or U.S. Patent Number 5,012,917 to Gilbert et al. (hereinafter "Gilbert") in view of either U.S. Patent Number 5,593,018 to Gosdowski et al. (hereinafter "Gosdowski") or U.S. Patent Number 4,307,988 to Page et al. (hereinafter "Page"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites a transfer system including, among other features, a work and part passage that completely separates a plurality of transfer lines into first and second groups of transfer lines as well as sub-transfer-passages which completely separate the plurality of transfer lines into third and fourth groups of transfer lines, which are different from the first and second groups of transfer lines.

Applicants respectfully submit that Sticht, Gilbert, Gosdowski, and Page do not teach or suggest such features.

In particular, Applicants respectfully note Sticht discloses a production installation for assembling or processing structural components having a main conveying path 18 and at least one pair of transverse conveying paths 21, 21 extending orthogonally therefrom (See Figure 2). A plurality of parallel 19 and transverse 20 conveying paths extend parallel to the main conveying path 18. Applicants respectfully note the conveying paths 18-21 form a single, closed loop that is not separated into first and second groups of separate transfer lines by a work and part transfer passage as each of

the conveying paths 18-21 is connected to another conveying path at a junction station 17. Moreover, Applicants respectfully note the conveying paths 18-21 are also not separated into third and fourth groups of separate transfer lines, which are different from the first and second groups, by sub-transfer-passages as each of the conveying paths 18-21 is connected to another conveying path at a junction station 17.

Gilbert discloses a transport apparatus 48 for an assembly line having a single transfer line that comprises parallel assembly lines 1 and 2 that are joined by parallel transverse conveyors 6 and 6a at corner transfers 5-5c. Gilbert does not teach or suggest a work and part transfer passage that completely separates the assembly lines 1, 2 and/or transverse conveyors 6, 6a into first and second groups of assembly lines/transverse conveyors. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit Gilbert does not teach or suggest sub-transfer-passages that completely separate the assembly lines 1, 2 and/or transverse conveyors 6, 6a into third and fourth groups of assembly lines/transverse conveyors.

The Office Action asserts Gosdowski or Page teach work and part transfer passages. Applicants respectfully disagree.

In particular, Applicants respectfully note Gosdowski teaches an apparatus for shifting work carriers having a main conveying path 40 that includes transfer belts 41' and 42' that are parallel to transfer belts 41" and 42". A branching conveying path 45 extends orthogonally to the main conveying path 40 and has transfer belts 45' and 45" that intersect the transfer belts 41', 41", 42', and 42". See Figure 1. Gosdowski does not teach or suggest the transfer belts 41', 41", 42', 42", 45', and 45" are completely

separated into different first, second, third, and fourth groups by a work and part transfer passage or sub-transfer-passages.

Page discloses a storage system for articles having a plurality of inclined storage compartments where an unloading member on an elevator removes articles from given compartments and transfers the articles to a conveyor from a transfer position on the elevator and the conveyor carries the articles to a delivery point. Page does not teach or suggest a plurality of transfer lines that are completely separated into first and second groups of transfer lines let alone sub-transfer-passages that also completely separate the plurality of transfer lines into third and fourth groups of transfer lines, which are different from the first and second groups.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness under 35 U.S.C. §103, each and every feature of a rejected claim must be taught by the applied art of record. See M.P.E.P. §2143.03. As noted above, not one of Sticht, Gilbert, Gosdowski, and Page teach or suggest the features of Claim 1 that are discussed above. As such, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 is not rendered obvious by the applied art of record and should be deemed allowable.

Claims 2-4 depend from Claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that these three (3) dependent claims be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons Claim 1 is allowable, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants respectfully note the Examiner has not considered the references cited by the Applicants in the Form PTO 1449 attached to the Information Disclosure Statement filed of September 15, 2003. Applicants respectfully submit that the references are not required to be submitted by the Applicants according to 37 C.F.R. §1.98(d). Put simply, Applicants note the instant application is a continuation-in-part of parent application number 09/807,988, which was relied upon for an earlier effective filing date under 35 U.S.C. §120. See Item 4 on page -2- of the Information Disclosure Statement. Moreover, Applicants respectfully note the Information Disclosure Statement in the parent application complies with 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)-(c). As such, Applicants reiterate they are not required to resubmit the references and that the Examiner is required to consider the references, copies of which are provided in the parent application. For the convenience of the Examiner, Applicants provide herein a clean, courtesy copy of the Forms PTO 1449 attached to the September 15, 2003 Information Disclosure Statement to be initialed by the Examiner after considering all of the references cited therein.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection, allowance of Claims 1-4, and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 107348-00362.**

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures: Forms PTO 1449

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FORM PTO-1449		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE	ATTY. DOCKET NO. 107348-00362	SERIAL NO. CIP of 09/807,988
LIST OF REFERENCES CITED BY APPLICANT <i>(Use several sheets if necessary)</i>			APPLICANT NISHIZAWA et al.	
			FILING DATE September 15, 2003	GROUP 3651

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

EXAMINER INITIAL		DOCUMENT NO.	DATE	NAME	CLASS	SUB- CLASS	FILING DATE
	AA	5,012,917	5/1991	GILBERT et al.	198	465.2	
	AB	5,271,490	12/1993	STICHT	198	465.2	
	AC						
	AD						
	AE						
	AF						

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

		DOCUMENT NO.	DATE	COUNTRY	CLASS	SUB- CLASS	TRANSLATION YES NO PART.		
	AG	JP -A-61-81320	04/24/86	Japan				X	
	AH	JP-A-4-306162	10/28/92	Japan				X	
	AI	JP-A-10-217047	08/18/98	Japan				X	
	AJ	JP-A-10-166230	06/23/98	Japan				X	
	AK	JP-A-8-215944	08/27/96	Japan				X	
	AL	JP-B2-4-57555	09/11/92	Japan				X	

OTHER REFERENCES (Including Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.)

	AM	
	AN	
	AO	

EXAMINER	DATE CONSIDERED
*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609; Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.	

FORM PTO-1449

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(Use several sheets if necessary)

APPLICANT

NISHIZAWA et al.

FILING DATE

September 15, 2003

GROUP

3651

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

EXAMINER INITIAL		DOCUMENT NO.	DATE	NAME	CLASS	SUB- CLASS	FILING DATE
	AA						
	AB						
	AC						
	AD						
	AE						
	AF						

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

		DOCUMENT NO.	DATE	COUNTRY	CLASS	SUB- CLASS	TRANSLATION		
							YES	NO	PART.
	AG	58-71049	4/1983	JAPAN					
	AH	1351749	11/1987	SOVIET UNION					
	AI								
	AJ								
	AK								
	AL								

OTHER REFERENCES (Including Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.)

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	AO	

EXAMINER

DATE CONSIDERED

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